with the men than orders of the High Command and appeals of the government.

An incident tested the soundness of our approach to the problem of military discipline. The commander of a regiment stationed in a front-line position wired to the Iskosol: "The regiment demands that new shoes be distributed to all enlisted men. The regiment declares itself unfit for battle. Unless fifteen hundred pairs of shoes are delivered in three days, the men will abandon the position."

I told the Iskosol I would go to the regiment at once. Kharash went with me—he seldom let me go alone to particularly dangerous points. We did not talk as we drove; both of us were angry. The regiment's tents were in a shallow valley flanked by grass-covered hills. The soldiers, silent and grim, sat on the hillside, rifles in their hands. The place for the speakers was at the foot of the hill. I walked over to it with Kharash, the colonel, and the chairman of the regimental committee and said, "I represent the All-Russian Executive Committee and the government. I am here to listen to your demand and answer it."

"Fine," soldiers shouted. "We want a prompt answer. If the shoes are not delivered . . ."

I turned to the chairman of the committee: "Please read the resolution."

"But you know it, Comrade Commissar!" he replied. "The colonel wired it to the Iskosol."

"Before I give any answer, I must have all the facts. I want to hear the resolution and be sure it is truly the decision of these men."

The chairman read the resolution, stumbling and obviously realizing for the first time how stupidly arrogant it was. But the soldiers enjoyed themselves and interrupted him with signs of approval. When he finished, I said, "Give me the paper. I want to have it in my hands before I give you the answer." Then I tore the paper to pieces and threw them away.

Hell broke loose. The colonel stood at my side with a livid face; the chairman looked down; Kharash stepped closer to me, smiling his approval of my gesture. The soldiers shouted, brandishing their guns. When the noise subsided enough so that I could speak, I said, "Your resolution is a disgrace to you and the army. I have destroyed it to clear you of that disgrace. A pair of shoes to each one of you, and you will defend your country and die for it, if necessary! No shoes, and you become a bunch of deserters and traitors? You cannot have meant this! But this is what your resolution says. This is why I tore up that damned paper."

The soldiers sat silent. The chairman of the committee said awk-